

Success factors of innovation networks: Lessons from agriculture in Flanders

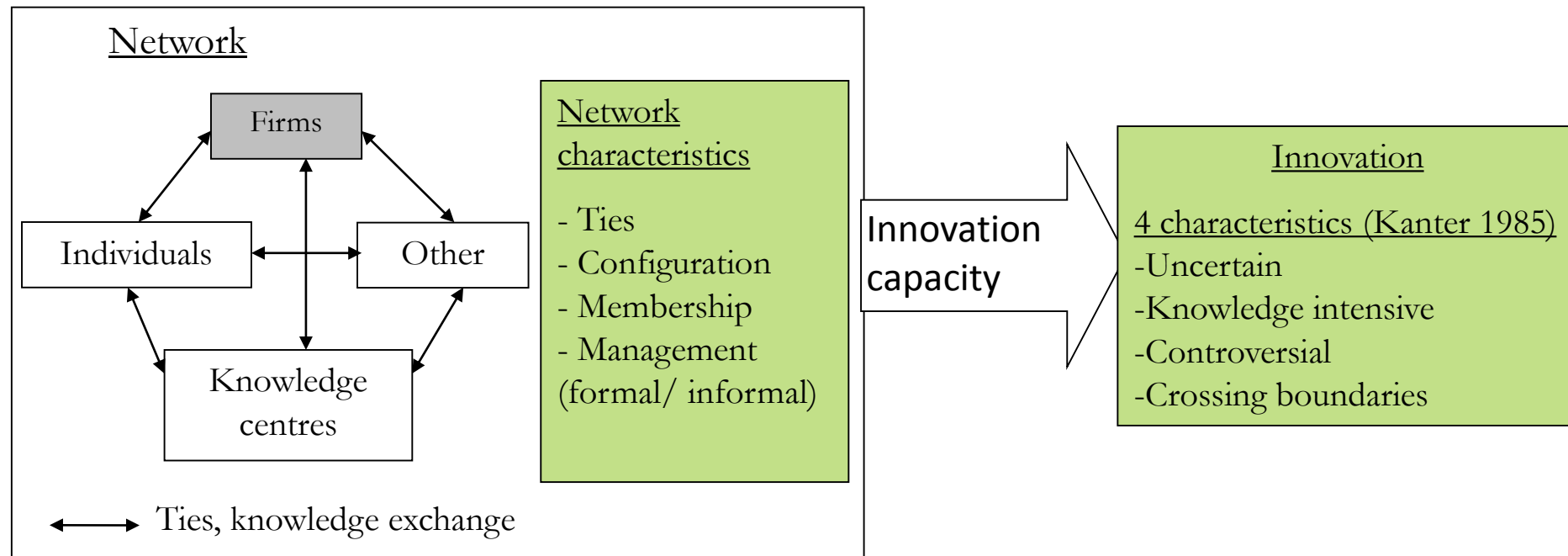


Evelien Lambrecht and Xavier Gellynck
Ghent University, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering,
Department of Agricultural Economics, Division Agrifood-Marketing and Chain Management

INTRODUCTION

GENERATION OF INNOVATION

- Networks become increasingly important as external sources of innovation



INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVE

- To gain insight into the network characteristics critical for successful innovations within the agricultural sector in Flanders

Methodology

Case study approach

Flanders

In-depth interviews with

- 38 farmers
- 23 network coordinators

Focus groups

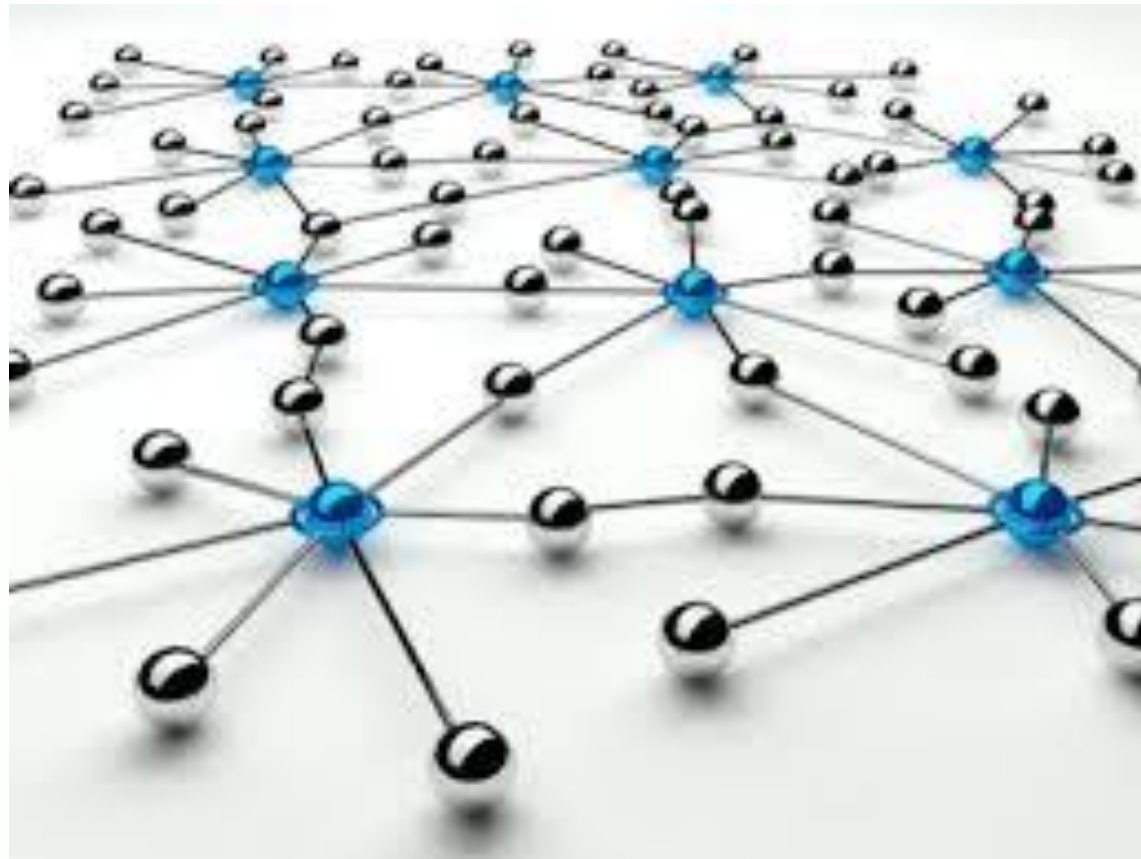
- 7 focus group discussions, reaching 48 farmers

Total: 109 respondents

NVIVO



FINDINGS: How does a network, through its network characteristics, cope with the four innovation characteristics



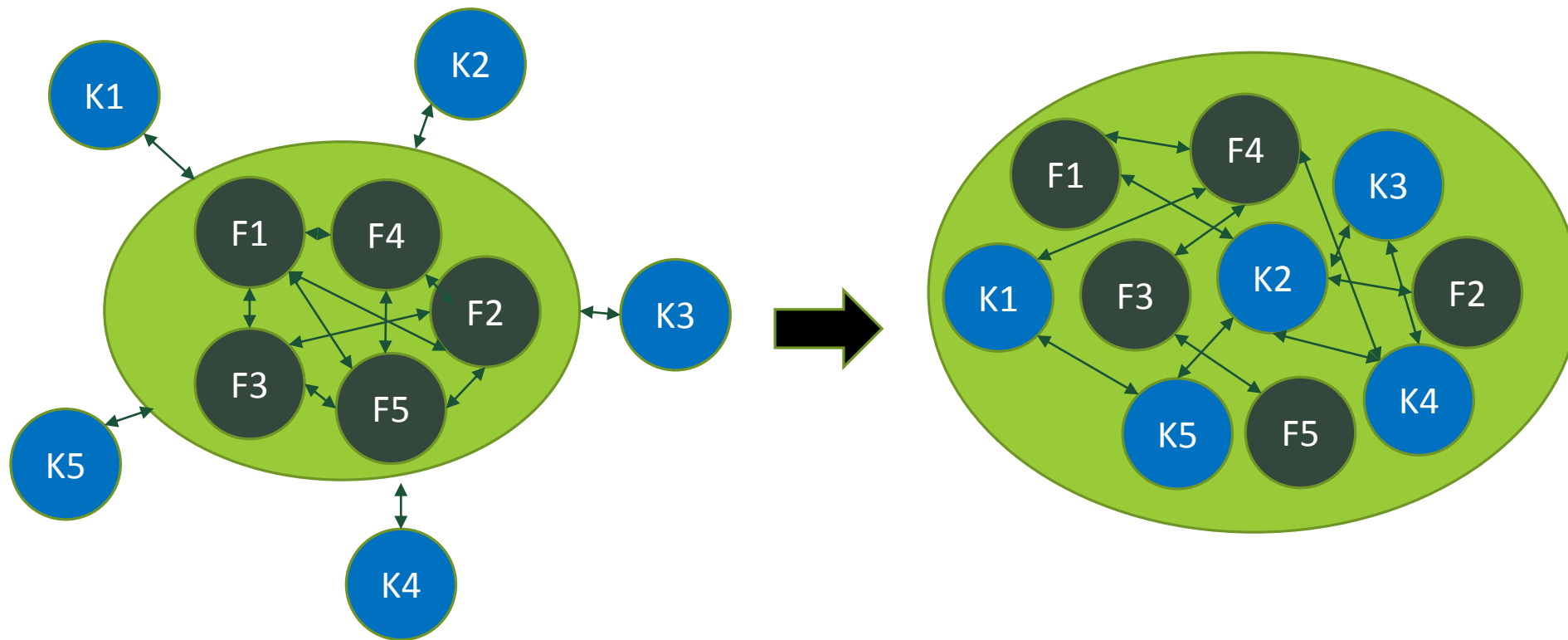
1. THE INNOVATION PROCESS IS UNCERTAIN

NETWORK AS A NET FOR NEW KNOWLEDGE

- Become early aware of changes and opportunities
 - Multiple contacts = higher chance to discover new things



1. THE INNOVATION PROCESS IS UNCERTAIN



SIET  NET
COMMUNITY



Commercial cell in auction

2. THE INNOVATION PROCESS IS KNOWLEDGE INTENSIVE

COMMUNICATION

- Distant communication hinders creativity
- Face-2-face communication



- Sietinet, producer association kiwi berry, private consultant

3. THE INNOVATION PROCESS IS CONTROVERSIAL

SELF INITIATED COALITION

- No third party INITIATOR
- Third party can FACILITATE
 - Introduction of product/market innovation via close collaboration among farmers and market



4. THE INNOVATION PROCESS CROSSES BOUNDARIES



SURPASS INNOVATION AT AGRICULTURAL LEVEL

- System innovation
- Consumers harvest own fruit/vegetables/flowers

Conslusions

- Multiple contacts
- Knowledge providers part of network
- Face-to-face communication
- Third party facilitator, feeling of ownership by members
- Look further than own company
- Active coordinator responsible for inviting members and preparation of agenda
- Stability in network coordination improves network success rate
- Concise groups
- Homogeneous expectations of the members

Future research

Quantitative measure of innovation capacity

Comparison with other sectors

Thank you for your attention!

